

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 17, 20, and 22-25 have been amended. As such, claims 1-4, 7-12, 15, and 17-27 are currently pending in the case. Further examination and reconsideration of the presently claimed application are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 9, and 17 were deemed allowable if rewritten to overcome claim objections noted below. Applicant sincerely appreciates the Examiner's recognition of the patentable subject matter recited in these claims. To expedite prosecution, claims 1, 9, and 17 have been amended to overcome the claim objections noted below, placing the claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 15, and 19-27 were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant sincerely appreciates the Examiner's recognition of the patentable subject matter recited in these claims. As noted above, however, claims 1, 9, and 17 have been amended to place them in condition for allowance. Accordingly, dependent claims 2-4, 7, 8, 10-12, 15, and 19-27 are also in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request removal of this objection. It is noted that although claim 18 was not specifically objected to, it is also in condition for allowance as being dependent from claim 17.

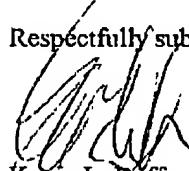
Objections to the Claims

Claims 1, 9, and 17 were objected for informalities. In particular, the claims terms "relatively wide trench" and "relatively narrow trenches" were rendered indefinite because the terms do not provide a standard for measuring the degree intended. In addition, claims terms "laterally spaced dummy trenches" and "dummy trenches" were cited as being inconsistent. To expedite prosecution, claims 1, 9, and 17 have been amended to clarify the claim language in a manner that addresses the concerns expressed in the Office Action for those claims. Accordingly, removal of this objection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

This response constitutes a complete response to the issues raised in the Office Action mailed April 14, 2004. In view of the remarks traversing the rejections, Applicants assert that pending claims 1-4, 7-12, 15, and 17-27 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, comments, or suggestions, the undersigned attorney earnestly requests a telephone conference.

No fees are required for filing this amendment; however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account No. 03-2769/5298-02502.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin L. Daffer
Reg. No. 34,146
Attorney for Applicants

Conley Rose, P.C.
P.O. Box 684908
Austin, TX 78768-4908
Ph: (512) 476-1400
Date: July 19, 2004
MEL